

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

January 27, 2009

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed elimination of the California Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) in a government efficiency proposal. DBW would be merged into the California Department of Parks and Recreation, which the Governor said would result in a savings of \$600,000 per fiscal year. This initiative has been attempted by a past Governor, and the effort was abolished when it was clear that the negative effect would greatly outweigh the cost savings.

DBW is completely self-funded by the boating public's resources. Diverting resources from DBW to a department with its own priorities separate and apart from boating robs the very community that funds DBW of vital support. Additionally, the diversion of funds may result in rapid deterioration in California's boating waterways and infrastructure, as DBW provides millions of dollars in grants and loans to private and public entities to help make boating infrastructure projects feasible. For example, the Department of Beaches and Harbors is working on an application for funding to replace and reconfigure the anchorages surrounding Mindanao Way in connection with its Chace Park expansion project. Without the availability of this funding, this project and other statewide boating infrastructure improvement and repair projects will be severely hampered.

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YAROSLAVSKY \_\_\_\_\_

ANTONOVICH \_\_\_\_\_

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Moreover, as DBW loans are paid back with interest, DBW is completely self-sustaining and does not impose a burden on the state's general budget. In fact, boating, itself, contributes greatly to California's economy. Recreational boating contributes approximately \$16.5 billion to the gross state product and generates about \$1.6 billion in state and local taxes. There are more than 8,500 recreational boating related businesses that create over 284,000 direct and indirect jobs. Thus, DBW's promotion of boating has a direct effect on California's future economic health.

Finally, DBW's safety programs save lives. Boating accidents are the second largest type of transportation accident in the nation, surpassed only by automobile accidents. DBW has an aggressive safety outreach program, including direct financial support for law enforcement in counties with substantial boating, which is critical to saving lives on the water. In 2008 alone, Sheriff Baca's department secured \$115,000 in funds from DBW to enforce all boating regulations in the Marina harbor and Santa Monica Bay waters, as well as to purchase boat and scuba diving equipment to carry out boating safety and enforcement responsibilities. Similarly, the Fire Department's Lifeguard Division receives over \$2 million annually from DBW for its rescue boat operations, safety training, and boat engine replacements and other boat equipment.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors oppose the Governor's proposal to eliminate the Department of Boating and Waterways and instruct our Sacramento advocates to communicate this position to the Governor.

**I, FURTHER, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office, in conjunction with the Sheriff's and Fire Departments and the Department of Beaches and Harbors, to prepare a letter of opposition to be signed by the Chair and sent to the Governor.

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